

about an hour the other day on the phone. He said: Jim, what those guys ought to do is simply amend the bill that's there and make it work. There hasn't been a single amendment brought in the House to make it work better.

This is a wonderful day for everybody.

#### HARD CHOICES TO MAKE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CONAWAY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Speaker, we're here during—I would not call it historic, because historical things simply happen every once in a while—a shutdown of our Federal Government. It's come because our colleagues on the other side of the building have simply taken an attitude of "it's my way or the highway." That's a wonderful way to look at life. It rarely works in the life you and I live in and that most of our colleagues and our constituents live in back home.

If you look at the Constitution by which we govern this country, it was a series of compromises—big States, little States, unicameral, bicameral. Across the board, there were compromises within that document that have allowed us to try to prolong and preserve this wonderful experiment that we call the American Dream and self-governance. This "my way or the highway" attitude that the leadership of the Senate has taken is calling that into question.

The statements made over the last several days by the folks who support the leader in the Senate must make them feel really good. But to those of us on the receiving end of those comments, it is insulting to be treated this way. It is insulting to have every opportunity we've put over there to try to reach a compromise on this issue to have it simply dismissed out of hand, not taken up on its merits but simply looked at and said: Never mind. It's the lower body over there. We'll treat these folks like children. Their ideas are unworthy of consideration and unworthy of debate. Let's just put them on the table with all the other hundreds of bills that this House has passed over the last 2 years and 8 months to try to move this country into a better position to move it along.

JFK said, "Let us never negotiate out of fear." We agree with that. But he also said, "Let us not fear to negotiate."

Why is HARRY REID fearing the negotiations? We've got our conferees ready to go. They've been named this morning—all good men and women. And the simple question is: Mr. REID, where are your conferees? Why are you afraid of getting into a room with House Republicans and House Democrats—if they'll ever appoint their conferees—and work this issue out? Why are you fearing that option? You're fearing it because you know that the American people are

behind House Republicans in this effort to rein this in.

The core of this issue is the Affordable Care Act. It is without question that this country is on an unsustainable fiscal track. We cannot afford the promises we've already made to each other over the next 75 years. Our grandchildren are at risk for not being able to self-govern because of the spending plans that we've got in place right now. The Affordable Care Act adds a new, third entitlement to this mix. It also is unsustainable. So why would we want to continue this process in the face of the threats that we already have with respect to the spending plans that are now in place for Medicare, Social Security, and Medicaid? They will bankrupt this country soon.

We've got hard choices to make with health care. There is infinite demand for health care, unquestionably, and there are finite resources. That requires a reconciliation.

At the core of the Affordable Care Act is: Who does that reconciliation? Should it be government? Should it be 15 bureaucrats in a room, nobody knows who they are, that are deciding what that care should look like? Or, should it be patients and caregivers making some of the most difficult decisions we will ever make in life to decide on health care issues? My money is on the folks in the fight. My money is on the families and the caregivers. They can make far better decisions in this difficult reconciliation process than anything that could be done here in Washington, D.C.

At its core, that's the fight—who makes your health care decisions at the end of the day, and how can this country afford the promises we've already made, which this President has said over and over he will not negotiate with respect to Medicare and Social Security. Where are his plans? Where are HARRY REID's plans for those two entitlements? And now they've taken that same mantra with respect to the Affordable Care Act. They're refusing to negotiate anything about that.

It's unseemly. It's un-American. And, quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, my constituents are demanding that we fix this and that we stop this shutdown that's unnecessary, but they also demand that the Senate come to the table with their conferees and let's begin the process of working that out. It is unseemly, as I said, for the Senate to continue to dismiss out of hand every attempt.

Quite frankly, those of us on the House Republican side are getting criticized for having to look like we're negotiating with ourselves, finding time and time again we're trying to find some middle ground that the Senate could, in fact, come to work with us; and this "my way or the highway" attitude the leadership has taken is beneath the dignity of this body.

□ 1100

#### LET THE MAJORITY VOTE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. GARCIA) for 5 minutes.

Mr. GARCIA. Mr. Speaker, this dog does not hunt. The cow has left the barn. This is absurd.

I rise today to urge Congress to put aside partisan politics. We are playing a dangerous game that the majority of Americans agree is time to end.

While certainly Congress needs to fix the Affordable Care Act—of course, I've signed on to several of these bills; we want to make this work. But what is true is that this is behind us. We can neither go back nor start again. We need to fix what we have.

Instead of finding commonsense solutions, all we are doing is letting people go home and not respond to those needs. In Florida alone, 90,000 folks are going to be sent home.

Not passing the legislation closes critical parks that are essential to tourism and hurts agencies that are essential to driving trade and commerce. This is ridiculous, and it is beneath the dignity of this body.

We've heard a lot of things from the other side here. I understand messaging so that we can make the argument, but what needs to be done is we need to sit. I sat with my colleagues on the other side just yesterday. You can see the angst in their eyes. But unfortunately, they have been taken hostage by extremist elements in their party.

The time has come to put these guys aside and come to a deal. We can fix a lot of these problems. We've cut government spending. We can do more of it. We can make government more efficient. We can fix the sequester and give agencies more flexibility.

We agree with all of that on this side. We just need our colleagues to step up and push aside these extremist elements, this "Taliban" that is in America's core for some reason. It's time to act. It's time to fix this problem.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you to please step forward. There are many of us that want to find a solution. We need to let the majority work its will. That is what the Founders intended for the House of Representatives. It is the voice of the country. It is the popular voice. Please let the majority vote.

#### LET'S NEGOTIATE, MR. REID

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MEADOWS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MEADOWS. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to ask the Senate to work with the House because of this shutdown.

You know, four times now we have met here in the House to send a plan over to HARRY REID to ask him to consider to negotiate, to find some solution to avoid the shutdown. But indeed, he made a decision that we would not have an honest, open debate; we would